TOWARD THE UPLANDS

LATER POEMS

LLOYD MIFFLIN

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BOOKS BY LLOYD MIFFLIN

THE HILLS

Page 8x10. With eight reproductions from pen drawings by Thos. Moran, N.A.

Privately Printed, 1896

AT THE GATES OF SONG

Illustrated with ten reproductions in half-tone after drawings by Thos. Moran, N.A. First and second editions.

Estes & Lauriat, Boston, 1897

Third edition revised and printed from new plates, with portrait. *Henry Frowde, London, 1901*

THE SLOPES OF HELICON AND OTHER POEMS

With eight illustrations by Thos. Moran, N.A., and with two by the author.

Estes & Lauriat, Boston, 1898

ECHOES OF GREEK IDYLS *Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899*

THE FIELDS OF DAWN AND LATER SONNETS

Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900

AN ODE ON MEMORIAL DAY

Written and delivered at the request of the G. A. R.

Out of Print

ODE ON THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL OF FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE, 1903

The Hoffer Press, 1903

BIRTHDAYS OF DISTINGUISHED 18TH CENTURY AMERICANS

With poetical quotations *The Levytype Co., Philada., 1897*

CASTALIAN DAYS

Fifty sonnets, with photogravure portrait.

Henry Frowde, London and New York, 1903

THE FLEEING NYMPH AND OTHER VERSE

Small, Maynard & Co., Boston, 1905

COLLECTED SONNETS

Being a selection of 350 of the Author's Sonnets

Henry Frowde, London and New York, 1905

MY LADY OF DREAM *Small, Maynard & Co., 1906*

TOWARD THE UPLANDS

LATER POEMS

BY

LLOYD MIFFLIN

To slake my thirst of song
—PINDAR

HENRY FROWDE
London
AND
35 WEST 32ND STREET
NEW YORK
MCMVIII

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PREFATORY

WITH the issuing of this volume—the tenth—the author finds that there have been published, aside from his other poems, four hundred and eighty-three Sonnets. In his "Collected Sonnets," first published in 1905, and revised and re-issued in 1907, he included three hundred and fifty, omitting thirty-three of those already made public.

Though between five and six hundred have been written, still the rising mirage lures, and makes the Dreamer hope, even against hope, yet to accomplish the writing of at least one sonnet that shall have no defect.

LLOYD MIFFLIN.

NORWOOD,
September 15th, 1908

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LYRICS

THE SPIRIT OF POESY

NOT the close friendship of the closest friends;
Not wealth descending on her golden wings;
Titles nor honor,—no ephemeral things,—
Can, for the lack of her, e'er make amends.
She will not stoop to sublunary ends,
Nor touch the baubles which the base world brings;
Her song unpurchasable, still she sings,
And all her soul upon the singing spends.
She treads her constellated paths alone,
Sandaled with starry aspirations bright,
Beyond the visions of this world—how far!
Sadly she sits upon her dazzling throne
In fading splendor, like a lingering star
That pales at sunrise in the wastes of light!

—*From* THE FIELDS OF DAWN

THE THRUSH

O RUSSET singer of the underbrush,
Half-hidden by the laurel near the ground,
While the soft twilight of the wood, profound,
Ancient and dim,
Deepens the solitude, where rarely comes a sound
'Mid all the trembling hush,
Save whispers o'er the fern, or, on the woodland rim,
The fitful murmur of the aspen leaves,—
O thou—thou sylvan Thrush!—
Now, when the lilac-vestured Evening weaves
The earlier stars within her dusky hair,
And dreamy grows the air,
Cease not to carol as I draw anear,
But sing, O lyric poet, silver-clear!
Pour forth thy rhapsodies amid the laurel-flower,—
Rosy as clouds around the Auroran hour,—
That all thy fellows of the copse may hear—
Wonder and hear—
And I, thy votary, bathe in deeps of song!

For thou dost sing, Oh, not for laud or fame,
As mortal bards who do the Muse a wrong,
But still impelled by some ethereal flame
Thou warblest adoration of thy love,
Who, on her nest,
Adores thee as thou singest, perched above.
And if thy throbbing breast
Harbors, as man's, some touch of vanity,
Perchance that trill—sweeter than all the rest—
Was meant for me,
To make me feel my own unworthiness:
That thou, a wild-wood bird,
Canst, with no effort or distress,
Humble my choicest word!

O envied singer of unequalled ease!
Born troubadour that never stooped to learn!
Thou untaught lyrist of the darkling trees,
Like to some deep-secluded greenwood burn
That gurgles over bronzèd stones,
Oft heard, but seldom seen,
Thou, in the unfrequented and sequestered green,

Pourest thy carol o'er the margin fern
In what enthralling tones!

Ah, how delightful there,
At evening, near the dusky forest floor,
Merely to lift thy throat in air
And let the music soar!
O winged Lover, free from care!
Spirit! without the wound of wrong;
'Tis thine but to inhale the golden air
And breathe it forth in song!
Yet Oh, refrain, dear Bird! subdue thy spell!
Sing less triumphantly!
He needs no humbling who is in the dust;
For ah, I know too well
By that wild, rapture-giving swell,
That affluent melody, that gust
And rain of song, thy crowned supremacy
O'er every bard that sings!
No mortal hand that ever touched the strings,
Since Jubal waked the wondrous shell
To winged words of fire,

Could match the dullest chord upon thy wood-
land lyre!

Lessen the throbbing of thy passionate flute
And quell that wild refrain!
Pause, and with intervals of silence, Oh, dilute
The poignancy of music—more than pain!
Ah, cease awhile thy lay,—
That liquid lilt and swing!
My song is naught compared with thine, to-day,
Thou rapturous thing!
Beside thy rippling and elusive strain
Here, in the umbered twilight of the Spring,
I am as one who doth assay to sing
Yet feels the singing vain.

O that ebulliency! that fervid note!
No effort, but an over-flow,—
A welling deep and long
And tremulously low;
A running-over of the wine of Song
From thine impassioned throat;

A gushing stream of liquid ecstasy;
Out-pourings of a fountain never dry,
Whose source is in the heart,—the heart,—
Ah, truer fountain than the font of Art
To stir the pulses by!
Thou pourest harmonies of richest sound
Deliriously
Thrilling the aisles of May.
These opulent redundancies of thine
Thou scatterest all regardlessly around
Above the laurelled ground,
Like jewels lightly tossed away
By some strange princeling in his ruby-mine
Of dusk Cathay!

And should I listen long
To that triumphant fluency of song,
'Twould chill the little ardor that is left
Within a heart made sensitive to wrong,
And of its dayspring reft.
In pity for my slender store,
O cease thy trembling lay,

Now, at the verge of day,—
No more, sweet Bird, I can endure no more!

Ah me! if I could speed along
Such piercing arrows of my song
Into the hearts of men,
As thou, from out this dell,
Sendest to stir my soul
With sweetness almost unendurable,—
Making the chimes of Memory toll
For things that were and may not be again,—
Ah then—ah then,
It were worth while to sing
E'en unto such a world as ours to-day
That listens not to lute or lay
While Mammon rules as king.

Vain is the wish! 'Tis not for me
To touch thy feet in minstrelsy.
The world hath need of sterner word
Than I, or thou, O darling Bird,
Could e'er articulate.

For thou art circumscribed by fate
In all thy melody;
The little circle of thy lay, elate,
Turns ever round thy mate and thee!
Thou hast no prescience in thy song
And so thou dost not feel
The agonies that come from Wrong
Dealt unto human weal.
What canst thou know of deep vicarious pain
In bosoms such as ours?
Of aspirations daily slain?
Of javelins in the quivering soul
From onset of the worldly powers?
What canst thou know of death, and famine's dole?
Or of the rising, world-ensanguined flood,—
The crimson trend of temporal things,
While tiger-hearted kings
Lap, with their thirsty swords, the Nations' blood?

Thou canst not know of griefs like these,
Close nestled near thy love,
Whose only sorrow seems the hawk above,—

A shadow floating o'er the trees.
Thou canst not feel that others' woes
Affect the gentle as their own,
So, through the dusky boscage, goes
Thy narrow lyric of the wondrous tone!
Thou canst not feel the aching pain
Of early dreams for ever lost;
Such sounds as stricken lovers breathe in vain
Have never crossed
The mellow chords of thy melodious throat.

A stranger art thou unto Sorrow's note,
For lightly come all troubles unto thee,
Melodious Bird!
Yet better far to be
More sensitive to suffering, and to feel
The multitudinous wail of human word,—
The immeasurable sorrow of the World,
And fling it forth in song, imperfectly unfurled,
Even as I do here,
Halting, and void of charm,
Than herald but a personal appeal

Though clarion-clear
And worthy wreathèd bays.
O better far the loudest-voiced alarm
Against the deep degeneration of these days,
Against our callous and inhuman ways,—
Some bugle-call
To idle loungers on the outer wall,—
Than merely such enraptured tones as thine,—
Singer, almost divine!
Singer, so idly-sweet!—
Which soothe the soul, but make no stirring plea,
Which gratulate thine own felicity
While the wronged world lies bleeding at our feet!

. . . . . .

Forgive the chiding word,—
Forgive the querulous mood,
O thou, from earliest days, my own belovèd Bird!
Dear comrade of the lonely wood,
Ere darkness cloak the dell,
O give me one more strain,
One more—of sweetness most ineffable—

The sweetness of farewell!
Companion of my solitude
And soother of my hidden pain,
Now, as the twilight goes,
Graying the Western rose,
Oh, sound again that passionate refrain!
Oh, pour thy balm upon the famished air,—
Let the full volume roll!
Thine—thine! beyond compare!
That I may hoard the music in my soul,
And, through the watches of my loveless night,
Remember, with delight.

IN DREAMFUL DAYS

Ah! on these calm autumnal hours of mine
  How gently to the close I wend,
As with some dream-tide on whose breast divine
  One glideth to the destined end!

Now from the empty chancel of the year,
  No lingering songsters lift their praise,
Where choral Summer, grieving, dropped a tear
  In memory of melodious days;

When now the nearer of the wooded rims
  Is merged in mellower amethyst,
And each beloved, familiar mountain swims
  In balmy seas of opal mist,

Here let me lie among the drowsy hills,
  To watch,—forgetting loss and pain,—
The dwindled ribbon of the lyric rills
  Meander through the endless plain . . . .

Meander on . . . and on . . . and on . . . and seem
Forever seeking for the Sea,
As if their flowing were a fading dream
That ended in eternity!

THE DEIST

O WHAT to him that on the upland slope
  Spring showers her blossoms with a roseate hand
Who, past the endless aeons sees no hope
    Of other life or land!

Winter or May, upon this transient sphere,—
  What are our fleeting seasons unto him
Whose eyes, long searching an eternal year,
    Despair, and then grow dim!

HARVESTS

The maples hold their wealth of gorgeous leaves,
And bloomy clusters by the vines are borne;
The barns are bursting with their store of sheaves,
And slopes are tawny with the tented corn;

But dearth of splendor all my Autumn yields,
And empty yawns the granary of my years;
Scant is the harvest of my wilding fields,
O'ergrown the vineyard, and the vintage—tears.

ALONE ON AN ENGLISH COAST

The gloaming falls; now fades the crescent moon;
The sombre cliffs are plumed with ling and fern;
Far on the beach, o'er many a wave-like dune,
Drifts the winged arrow of the wandering tern.

Adown the shore the dim sea softly grieves,—
Laps on the lonely sands with languid pulse;
And strewn along, mournful as Autumn leaves,
Lie the torn fringes of the crimsoned dulse.

. . . . . .

Ah, throw thy shade around me, brooding Day,
Wrap me in visions that the darkness brings;
Oh, fold me in thy hush of cloistral gray—
Deep in the peace of thy protecting wings!

TO A YOUNG WHITE BIRCH IN WINTER

Slenderest sapling! standing by the rill-side
Where leafless woods are stark,
With all thy beauty gleaming 'gainst the hill-side,
Of snowy-satin bark,

Thy nakedness is chaste as hers Ionian
Who 'mid the rushes ran,
Turning her loveliness to the Ladonian
And reedy pipes of Pan!

Thy delicate tips are hyacinthine tresses
That veil thy maiden charms;
Thy smooth and gracile limbs, the sense confesses,
Lovely as Lara's arms!

Scarce of the earth, thou seemest some aërian
Dropped from a fabled clime,
Alighting here, a later sylph Hesperian,
In our unclassic time.

Art thou that dual spirit loved in childhood—
Nymph and a tree in one?
Art thou the Hamadryad of the wild-wood,
Out of the old legend spun?

. . . . . .

Ah, no! the symbols and the sweet delusions
Are into silence furled;
And the dim train of consecrate illusions
Trails sadly from the world.

Erratum, Page 19, line 4.
Read the line without the "the," as it was written.

TO THE SPIRIT OF TWILIGHT

O THOU, the dim sad sister of the Dawn,
Who, when the glory of the sunset dies
Into the afterglow,
Art seen upon the hills

Shod with the purple sandals of the Eve,
Drawing about thy phantom-form austere
Thy vague, ethereal robes
Grey as the breast of doves! —

Who, as thy shadows gloom the fading vale,
Dost hang aloft the larger lamp of heaven,
Making the rising moon
Lantern the way-side trees

For lonely travelers lost; and for the elves
Lightest the glow-worm candle in the murk
Of ancient forest glades
And umbered dells profound:

O tender Twilight with the Urns of Balm!
Cup-bearer of the drowsy wine of dusk!
Dove of the Evening! drop
Thine olive on our breast:

We crave the covert of thy sheltering cloud;
Wrap us in greyness of forgetfulness;
Dole us, at vesper-bell,
Down-pillows of thy hush:

Drop soft oblivion from thy sombre plumes
On earlier aspirations,—haunting ghosts,—
That mock us in disdain,
Scoffing, from dales of youth:

Shield the strained eyes that gazed too long at suns;
And, in the mercy of thy vestments, fold
Dream-wounded souls that sink
Earthward, with bruisèd wings.

OTHER POEMS

WAITING

I KNOW her heart. Though far in other spheres,
Mild 'mid the aureoled sisterhood she dwells
Beauteous as dawn, yet oft her soul rebels
Against the walls that Heaven around her rears.
She weeps in Aidenn—weeps, and earthward peers,
Listening along the bulwarks for farewells
Wafted from yearning lips; sees immortelles
Love wreathes above her tomb in blinding tears.
Could all of Heaven, when Seraph-trumps rejoice
And dazzling thrones by flaming wings are fanned,
Restrain her from an errant thought of me
Who hunger for the love within her voice? . . .
I know her heart through all Eternity:
She reaches down to lift me by the hand.

ON THE PORCH BEFORE DAYBREAK

No glimmer of reluctant light appears
And yet the dusk is going, and the blue
Pales where the East will bloom. Besprent with dew,
The slim young rabbit, rising, lifts her ears,
Then nestles down in sleep too deep for fears;
There is no faintest wind to wander through
Drowsed orchards, and the seeded grasses woo;—
No clarion of defiant chanticleers.
The shuttered rooms are hushed. The sleeping hen
Folds her soft flock beneath her bulging wings;
The brooding dove is dreaming in the glen;
Silent the hives upon the slumberous lawn,
And darkly clustered, where the fountain springs,
The impassioned roses wait the kiss of Dawn.

SHAKESPEARE

Thou hast no private sorrow in thy page—
No home-felt agony that sears the line.
From Hamnet's death—that cup of bitter wine—
No threnode flowed that could thy sorrow guage.
And though thy Verse records, in earlier age,
Dark glimpses of a soul enmeshed with thine,
Dumb are the Dramas. Thou dost give no sign,
Cryptic, and incommunicative Mage!
Poet occult! whose runes are hard to read,
Wast thou of all thy Characters a part?
Or are they Shadows, meant but to mislead?
Within thy Plays each soul stands clear revealed,
But when we seek to probe *thy* inmost heart—
Silence inscrutable! . . . The tome is sealed.

IN THESSALY

The ilex shadow all the evening lies
Athwart the blue Anaurus, lyric stream
Where Jason lost the sandal . . . As a dream
Iolchos' aeon-buried columns rise
Ghostly from eld. The legend-throbbing skies
Bend over Pelion—Pelion the supreme—
The ancient haunt of Centaurs, while I seem
Back in memorial days of famed emprise:
Again the hoofs infuriate thunder by!
The frenzied Horse-Men, risen from their lairs,
Surge into battle with their human cry,
As whirlwind Chiron, by the carnage spurred,
Crimsoned with foam, charges the rival herd,—
His raging stallions fighting for the mares!

AWAITING DAWN AT DELOS

I WATCHED the East from cliffs above the sea:
Far down the dark Ægean rose and fell;
In vaulted caves, wherein the mermen dwell,
The wearied winds were folded, quietly.
No sound,—save on the deep's immensity
Some far-off Nereid blew a plaintive shell:
Then phantom-music rose, ineffable,
Apollo's prelude to the strains to be.
Sudden the hoofs of sunrise beat the fire
From crags of gray adown the rended sky;
Flushed, on the cloud, his coursers winged along;
Divine efflation thrilled him from on high,
And as the rapt god smote the burning lyre,
He flamed the world with amplitude of Song!

A LITERAL STUDY IN NOVEMBER

The maize is cut,—some fodder tightly pressed
Close to the barn to ward the coming cold;
And through the slats the corn-crib shows its gold;
The log-made cottage seems a tiny nest
Hid under vines. The emptied garden, dressed
For freezing days, reveals its umbered mound
Where celery, bleaching, greens the wintry ground
That earns, at last, the sweet recurrent rest.
Hay fills the leaning shed below the eaves;
A bulging board upon the gable shows
The very comb crammed full of yellow sheaves;
And underneath the bare November boughs
An old man, fumbling 'mid the maple leaves,
Gathers encrimsoned bedding for the cows.

THE SEARCH

Through sunless voids and regions nebular,
Long had he searched. And as his eager wings
Pulsed for new fields, he urged their winnowings
And dropped through splendors to a golden star.
He coursed each steep,—each spirit-peopled scaur;
Then sought the Cluster that in cycles swings
Its luminous World-dust in eternal rings,
But saw her not on all those coasts afar.

Turning, he plunged—as men plunge in the wave—
Down—down the abysmal depths earthward he went,
While suns swept past him up the dim profound.

. . . . . .

He stood within the churchyard by her grave. . . .
Solace, at last, he knew, and sweet content:
She waited there,—and Heaven on Earth they found.

THE PANG OF ART

To those who build, with tracery of dreams,
The vaulted halls of immaterial things,
What comfort from the earth? What solace brings
The lyric purling of her tuneful streams
To those for whose rapt ears the myrtle teems
With song immortal? Ah, what throat that sings
Equals the tone of their imaginings?—
The Ideal dulls, for these, all lesser gleams.
O let some god, omnipotent on high,
Lend our feet plumes to reach the ethereal gate,
Or still the yearning spirit's eager cry
For vast peaks unattainable, and roll
Fathoms of silence on us till the soul
End her insatiate craving to create!

THE SOVEREIGN OF THE POLE

Halt on the verge—ye cannot enter here!
I, only I, am Monarch of this zone:
My heart,—a magnet, that forever draws
Prows from all ports, until my fleet of Bergs
Batters them back; or Horror, Fear, and Night,
With cohorts of the Cold, cripple and numb.
My myrmidoms are Hunger and Despair;
I am the lure to Glory and Achieve.
I rend the banners of the World's advance,
And rear the bastions round my throne of ice:
Lord am I of the Vasts of Loneliness,
And Dread and Desolation are my crown:
My kingdom is a waste whereon are strewn
The graves of Hope,—the sepulchres of Fame.

THE RAMBLE

Through immemorial woods, whose fallen trees
Moulder to umber tones, where once of yore
Rose the peaked wigwams of the Sagamore:
Up leafy paths, high o'er the valley leas,
Where autumn, weaving, spreads her witcheries:
By such sylvestrian ways I near thy shore,
O evening Susquehanna, where the roar
Of foaming water greets me on the breeze!
I lie upon the headland. . . . Far below
Thy wedded islands sleep. On purpling bars
The heron wades. Here, dreaming, let me rest
Where halcyon airs their gentle balm bestow,
Watching the rich florescence of the West
And solemn congregation of the stars.

BEAUTY

Foredoomed am I to serve her. Where she glows,
There is my heaven. These famished lips are fain
To kiss her naked feet, although in vain,—
The Nymph illusive comes, elusive goes:
I reach to fold her to my heart,—she flows
Wave-like away, and with a sweet disdain
Beckons me on to where I see remain,
Rising resilient from her step, the rose:
So, panting after Beauty all my days,
I trace her footings o'er the wind-swayed wheat,
Drawn by her blown hair fluttering in the glades,
Or white arms luring down Idalian ways:
I am her thrall, and she,—a splendid cheat,—
Fadeth forever, though she never fades.

THE LESSENING SQUARE

The silent plowman, when the woods are browned,
Slow with his team along the edges goes
Of yon green field, and with his plowshare throws
One strip of sod at each recurrent round,
Lessening the centre which at dawn he found;
Then, at the last, at day's pathetic close,
Ceasing, he leaves a margin which still shows
Green in the midst of the encroaching ground.

O Time, the ruthless, the relentless! thou
Drivest thy furrows through our poor bright years:
How swift *our* square of verdure disappears!
Oh, wait beyond to-morrow, even now
Hold back the share! this remnant-strip allow,—
Oh! leave us this—this pitiful strip of tears!

EVENING IN THE VALLEY

The pale Day, lingering down the darkening ways,
Wraps the dusk hood around her, while she grieves
For loved refulgence gone, and as she leaves,
Veils her reluctance in a tender haze.
The Gloaming, sombered by the glimmering greys,
The fading pageant delicately weaves;
And weary reapers, gathering golden sheaves,
Are dimmed with pathos of departing rays.
The ashen roses of the Twilight sleep;
Home-coming voices fade along the leas,
While plainting murmurs hover o'er the dell:
Then vestal Evening, on her purpled steep,
Swings the gold crescent as a thurible,—
Her incense curling from the cottage trees.

BITTER-SWEET

Gowned like a lily, in the orchard fair
Slowly she moved as some far cloudlet might;
A dream of Maidenhood,—a vision bright:
She touched the asters, and a happy air
Trembled among them; stooped, with tender care,
Above a butterfly; raised her full height,
Bent the ripe bough, and with a child's delight,
Pressed her sweet lips against the fruitage there.

I dropped my book. The wisdom of the wise—
O what was all the learning of the past!
My youth came back. I saw, across the years,
Visions of tenderness too sweet to last,
And fond remembrance brought to yearning eyes
The bitterness of unavailing tears.

SUNSET OVER CAMELOT

Faint, bannered towers of strange magnificence
Loom on the verge of evanescent steeps.
Donjons, dismantled, crumble into moats
Of liquid jasper. Dim-emblazoned gates
Open on sumptuous aisles, where columned courts
Lead up to golden domes. And clarions blow,
Far off, to spectral hosts, where faintly seen,
Dissolving Legions girt with spear and plume,
File on in purple pomp. Raised Phoenix-wings
Of cloud, burn into life. With scarlet scales,
Pythons—whose tongues belch flame—in dragon-coils
Fade in unfathomed antres of the air
Whose darkest depths flash splendor; over all,
The encrimsoned Wyverns beat their vans of fire.

"THE SHADOWY ARRAS"

The hooded Sorceress, wrapped in mystic gloom,
Sits in her vaulted hall. From depths untold
Of cryptic mind, she spins the woof of gold—
Her vaporous tapestry of immortal bloom.
Rich with the fateful web, each storied room
Glows with impassioned blazon. Dim unrolled
Within that palace, gorgeous fold on fold,
Depend the solemn splendors of her loom.
She is the weird Enchantress who foredeems
Futurity. The worlds to her belong,—
Heaven, and Hades, and the Slopes of Song:
Strange prescience fills her with consummate gleams
Divine, and as Life's pageants round her throng,
She weaves her shadowy arras out of dreams.

PHAON AND SAPPHO

PHAON

Star of my life! though Time, the wingèd, flies,
Upon thy cheek no faintest shadow shows.
Lean toward me,—I would take the bosomed rose
That pants with bliss—so near thy heart it lies.
Age? didst thou say? . . . Ah, no! to me thine eyes
Are dream-lit pools of Dawn. Love still bestows
His lure upon thy lips. Thy spirit glows
Warm as the light within yon sunset skies!

SAPPHO

How sweet to hear our lover swear untruth!
Lo, while the sunset wears its roseate bars
My twilight comes! . . . Strown blossoms of my youth
Dim the dewed paths,—but thine the auroral years:
Once more thy lips! . . . Day only hides the stars:
The dark wave calls . . . Ah! these are Love's own tears!

TO THE SOUTH-WIND

O WIND of June, that o'er the unripe grain
Sweeps like the wave of far-off fretful seas;
That with a wilful waywardness doth tease
The feathered grasses, bending them amain
In undulant swirls; and from the tangled lane
Doth fill the eve with roving fragrance rare,
Troubling the blossom into perfumed air,
Whence comest thou—from what entranced domain?
O marvelous odors, driftures undefined,
Strange wandering wafts the senses ne'er disclosed,
Are ye the spirits of the dying flowers
Passing away? Or dost thou, gentle Wind,
Blend drowsèd sweets of all the long June hours
Culled from the uplands of the wilding rose?

THE LAST DAYS OF COLUMBUS

YEA, Lord, I come; yet dazed, I still behold
My westering caravels, full sail, and feel
Strange exaltation as again the keel
Grates on the fulgent sands! O shores of gold—
India at last! and all that wealth untold
For Isabella and the Church's weal! . . .
Dreams—dreams! . . . Ah, hear me, Mary, as I kneel
In prayer,—forsaken, abject, poor, and old! . . .
Yet gave I not to ingrate Ferdinand
Climes goldener than Indus? . . . . What was Spain's
Return?—The ignominious felon-chains,—
Such were the laurels Bovadilla gave,—
The infamous gyves that galled me foot and hand—
But they shall shame the World from out my grave!

THE METEORITE

NEW YORK

Whirled from the nebula, through vasts untried,
Falling upon the wastes of snow, ablaze,
I flushed the bergs like dawn. In dumb amaze
Strange creatures, wondering, gathered round my side
In the white gloom. Then, when the North was dyed
In utter splendor of the Boreal rays,
Slowly I moved through long, drear, pallid days,
Till a swift carrier bore me o'er the tide.

Hard is my doom!—to stand for countless years
Hearing, within these mundane prison bars,
Turmoil of men, or clash of mortal wars:
Fallen am I upon a World of tears,—
I that helped make the music of the spheres,
I that once moved among the morning stars!

THE TWILIGHT VISITANT

When evening fell, pacing my phantomed lane,
I mused how Time hath Poets overthrown;
And, standing near the gateway's pillared stone,
I peered for Shades of loved ones all in vain.
Lingering I looked, when, o'er the twilight plain,
In sandals and in chiton,—far—alone—
I felt his spirit coming,—heard a tone
Of Pastoral Song,—the double-flute's refrain.
Vine-leaves entwined his brow and yellow hair:
He touched his pipe and sang,—so sweet, in sooth,
I scorned my Lays, and listened in despair:
Whose could they be—those childish eyes of truth?
But when I saw the genius glowing there
I knew Theocritus—the golden youth!

THE DOOM OF THE FOUR CITIES

Then God was wroth,—His nimbus paled its light:
He bade the Legions from the nadir rise,
Till hordes of wingèd Demons dimmed the skies,
Up-surging, dense as cliff-birds whirled in flight:
The clash of dragon vans gashed the wild night,
While raucous throats, red with demoniac cries,
And loathsome Shapes, with crimson-lidded eyes,
Hung like a swarm, hovering, ere they should smite.
Eager for prey, the myriad spawn took wing—
The thunder-hurlers of a God of wrath—
With lightnings thrown from each infuriate hand;
With sulphur-rain, and fiery scorpion-sting,
Cities and men flamed in their furious path,
And Desolation stalked the chastened land.

BY SWATARA STREAM

The plashing herd in golden waters dreamed,
While lapping shoreward, languid circles died
In lyric gurgles where the ripples glide:
The dragon-fly in burnished armor beamed
A splendor on the reed-top, till he seemed
Some fragment of the sunset. Far and wide
The wings of Evening, folding at her side,
Purpled the hills where late the river gleamed.
The Twilight laid her hand upon the breeze
And lulled the waving of the upland wheat;
The roseate Day was dying, softly knelled
From phantom turrets over faery seas;
While in the dusky pasture at our feet
We heard the tinkling leader, mellow-belled.

THE CLOUD

O FADING Cloud! Child of the mountain dew!
Where art thou trailing on thy sunset wings?
So far removed above all troublous things,
Seeming the peaceful Spirit of the blue.
Soul of the air! wilt thou not give some clue,
Some tidings of celestial whisperings?
What unseen courier, hastening to thee, brings
Chart of those heavenly realms thou dost pursue?
Thou sailest on, unconscious what awaits;
Even as man, whom time doth dispossess.
Was it for this, alas, that thou wast made—
To vanish into glorious sumptuousness,
Dissolving slowly near the jasper Gates,
As we, at fateful evening, droop and fade?

A POET IN HIS YOUTH AND AGE

At dawn we felt the sunrise in his rhyme;
Then came a change to formal and severe:
No sun-flushed dales—no homely touch or tear—
No golden meadows set with lowly thyme.
Older he grew; and tenderer was the chime,—
Nearer the heart; and through his page sincere,
Mellowed by life, there ran, occult though clear,
The sweet reverberation of the prime:

As one in cold December, from the hills
Descending to the valley, footing slow
Beside the frozen margin of the rills,
Listens, astart, as in a waking dream,
And faintly hears, beneath the crusted snow,
The gurgle of the summer-hearted stream.

AWAKENING CHORDS

As Spring, presentient of her power, flows
Through all her wide and myriad-leafèd green,
The deep-wood melodists begin to preen,
And the full brook a richer anthem knows.
The woodbine blooms; the mountain-laurel glows
Scarlet among her leaves' perennial sheen;
Resurgent now, in every wild ravine,
We see the reflorescence of the rose.

So from the mind, an eager spirit springs,
Rich in proud dreams, and flushed with ardent hopes,
To mount her throne above the marveling throng;
While exiled Muses, on Castalian slopes,
Attune their trembling lyres, as April brings
The sweet re-blooming of the Rose of Song.

"WHAT FEET INTRUSIVE"

What feet intrusive, as the years ensue,
Will linger on this porch? When Winter glooms,
Or early daffodil the lawn relumes,
What eyes will look from windows which I knew?
When I have vanished long from earthly view
Will vapid souls profane those vestal rooms—
Those pensive halls, where, wove on phantom looms,
The cloth of gold of veilèd poems grew?
What alien then will tread this haunted floor?
Caress these books? be filled, as I, with hope,
As humbly proud, I penned the thought august?
Ah, who will see, along the evening slope,
The grief-touched landscape through the opened door,
And dream a poet loved it—long since dust?

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Immurmurous Hall, with aisles of grateful shade,
Hushed refuge from the tumult of the street,
Be thou my Fane, with sculptured gods replete,
Mine altar dim—my sanctuary glade!
With genius rare on every side displayed,
Dearer thou art than dreams of waving wheat
In dales of vanished Youth! . . . O rich Retreat
Throbbing with garnered shapes that never fade!
The deathless dead are round me. In these rooms
Glow the achievèd summits of mankind:
The marbles breathe: the color flames and glooms—
Immortal Beauty by the soul divined;
Inviolate here the pure Ideal blooms,
The flower of Man's creative, God-like mind!

UNREMEMBERED

The evening sombered; and the solemn skies
Whispered of him I loved,—ah, long since gone!
His presence hovered round me, but his tone
Seemed to ignore old loves, and filial ties.
Grieved,—as he half-recalled me with surprise,—
I felt as one whom love did now disown,
When he, by absence even dearer grown,
Leaned on my soul those unremembering eyes.
Touched with vague, subtile disaffinities,
He seemed some dim king wandering from a throne:
I asked, beseeching, of his Heavely Rest,
But answer came mysterious as the sea's,
And all unearthly . . . Then, within the West
Stars having risen, he vanished where they shone.

THE LEAFLESS TIDE

The light has left the River, and the sun,
With his enfeebled and reluctant rays,
Enshrines the islands in regretful grays
Plaintive and wan;—the glooming has begun.
Paled are the grasses by the willowed run;
The mellow opal of October days,
Dreamful with glamour of enfolding haze,
Has faded to a memory, and is done.
Whirled funnels of sere leafage, tawn and red,
Spiral the woods: the startled pheasant whirs
O'er lonely swales to deeper covert-shades;
While high and far, from reaches dim o'erhead,
Is heard the honk of wingèd mariners,—
The thin wedge arrowing to the everglades.

"THE SWEET DAY FADES"

The sweet Day fades. She folds her nerveless wings,
Slowly and softly, o'er her tranquil breast
As if she were aweary of the quest,
Seeking oblivion of terrestrial things.
Yet doth she pass in purple. Sceptered kings
Have no such dying couch at their behest
As hers,—reposing stately in the West,—
Within whose heart glory, remembered, clings.
The sumptuous pageants round her sink and lie
Bathed in the riches of the afterglow;
These pale, and o'er the ghostly sunset bars
A phantom requiem from the yearning sky
Lingers above her, where she lieth low,
In splendor palled amid communing stars.

MEN OF INTEGRITY OUR HOPE

My Country, when I muse on what thou art;—
  Greed and Corruption rife on every hand,
  Most private rights ignored, and freedom banned;—
  I sorrow in the sanctum of my heart.
Then when I think of what a noble part
  Thou mightst have born,—thou, once so nobly planned
  To lift the race to honor and command,—
  Despair will deepen and my hope depart.
But when I know that underneath this crust
  Of evident iniquity, there rest
  The primal virtues, latent, long defied;
That half our noblest men are now suppressed,
  Then hope returns; to them my faith is tied:
  Our Land's redemption unto these I trust.

AN AGED WORK-WOMAN OF DARTMOOR

Like blushing roses on new-fallen snow,
Such were her cheeks,—for she was young and fair;
Radiant as morning, and her golden hair
Haloed her beauty—ah, how long ago! . . .
Those hands, once lovely, with accusing blow
Now pierce us with their pathos . . . Pain and Care
Sit with her, and her portion is to bear
Infirmities the darkened years bestow.
Those eyes that plead for aid with hopeless gleams—
Lorn pennants from the masts of sunken ships;
Those graves of love,—her winter-withered lips,—
Are Time's rude tallage and long-buried pelf.
Filled with dim sorrows, she already seems
The urn that holds the ashes of herself.

THE VOICE OF THE FOREST

My voice cries out of grey antiquity
And brands you Slayers of earth's priceless things—
Exterminators of the Forest Kings
That held their sceptres by this Western Sea
Ere ye were born—base ingrates that ye be!
Ye brazen Spoilers! lo, the future brings
God's gathered wrath, for still the woodland rings
Daily, with death-throes of the slaughtered Tree.
O shameless Vandals of a mammon age,
Hear ye my words:—"Where fruitful fields now bloom
Deserts shall stretch, whose lords are Drought and Sand,
And on those wastes Famine and Death shall rage,
And starving Peoples, blighted by that doom,
Shall curse you for the desolated Land!"

O RECREANT DAWN

In earlier days we sought, with buoyant feet,
The uplands of the mind. But not alone
We trod the heights! Around us radiant shone
The gleam of white ideals. Our pulses beat,
Throbbing with ichor. The resplendent cheat—
The glorious fallacies of Dawn—had grown
Beacons to guide us, till we made our throne
Upon the up-rolling clouds—ethereal seat!
We, who at dawning chanted by the streams;
Whose wingèd steps yet sought the Fane of Truth,—
Followed the flaunting gonfalons of Youth,—
Now pause, at eve, and ask with fluttering breath:—
"Since Life hath razed our Citadel of Dreams,
What lure hast thou to offer,—*thou*, O Death?"

IN MARCH

He walks the wintry road, and winds away
Deep in the dale where ice-bound brooklets gleam;
Where lonely pastures, long-deserted, seem
Waving farewells from slopes of withered grey.
He lists what woodland spirits, whispering, say,
Where silvery beeches of the Summer dream;
Or, on the margin, stops to hear the stream
Carol o'er icy stones her hope of May.
Nor does his vision end with wood or field,—
He treads, in revery, o'er the azure rim:
Though glad of simplest things—to these resigned—
Dearer the phantom world vouchsafed to him:
Thankful if so the barren Winter yield
The sweet illusions of the storied mind.

THE IRREVEALABLE WILL

WHITHER, O God? . . . In Thy profound is furled
Thy fiat dark. Blind at the loom, man weaves,
But Thou controll'st the pattern he achieves:
Upon the headlong torrent blindly whirled
He enters life,—and lo, Thy bolt is hurled.
Where *are* they, e'en Thy last year's gleanèd sheaves
Of men? . . . Unfindable as last year's leaves
That fell in all the forests of the world!
E'en as the myriad spirits of the frost—
Snowflakes—that falling, melt, yet show no dearth
As onward pours the multitudinous host,—
Forever Death, and still forever—Birth,—
So the world-millions come, and so are lost,
Tombed in the mighty mausoleum—Earth!

STATUE OF LORENZO D' URBINO, FLORENCE

LORENZO—*loquitur*

Look, and pass on! . . . Here, o'er the princely tomb,
Eterned in bronze, I muse in sombre state.
Beneath the helmet's shadow I await
Ages to come. Round me in marble gloom
The Master's sculptures quiver into bloom,—
Symbols immortal and inviolate. . . .
Silence and cloistral peace;—yet, 'tis my fate,
Troubled, to dream of Princes and their doom.
Change comes not here, though centuries ebb and flow:
Question me not; I brood, and would forget . . .
Still smiles the Babe, carved by our Angelo,
At Mary's side—"The Prince of Peace." Not yet
His kingdom is while earth with blood is wet
E'en as I left it. . . . Leave me with my woe!

THE QUIET HOUR

The sycamores along the margin make
The brook a moving mirror of their green.
Here wade the cattle in the sunset sheen,
Dappled by shadowings of the leaves, that take
The sense with beauty. Drowsed, and half awake,
The great bull awes us by his lordly mien;
Noble he stands—the monarch of the scene,
As round him, ring by ring, the ripples break.
The breeze has winged to dells beyond our view,
Nor moved the gilded arrow of the vane;
And, shown against the glimpse of distant blue,
Rich glow the apples on the orchard boughs;
While tripping barefoot down the quiet lane,
The farmer's little daughter calls the cows.

IN ARCADY

Strolling at twilight, in a land of dream,
I heard a presence quit his hushed abode.
A leopard-skin on gathered grape-leaves, showed
An empty lair beside the sanded stream.
Faint rustling of the rushes, and a gleam
Told that a figure through the boscage strode,
Where clustered fruit in luscious colors glowed:
Leaf-folded curds, I saw, and caprine cream;
Cymbals; and for Ladonian wine, a cup
Of cypress, carved, where young kids ever pranced;
Red-hearted melons jemmed with jetty seeds;
And lo! her foot-prints, where the white Nymph danced,—
And when I, smiling, picked a syrinx up
I guessed whose feet had vanished through the reeds!

"SEAS SHALL RECEDE"

Seas shall recede and leave a waste of sand;
The unreplenished clouds shall fade away;
The forests die, and all the world of green
Parch to a desert; and above shall roll,
Unharnessed, wandering through the yawn of space,
Suns which officiate darkness;—moons, long dead,
Void of reflected ray of burning orb,
Planet, or belted star. The stars themselves
Shall to the nadir drop, and on their thrones
Unscintillating blackness reign supreme,
A sheer dis-splendor of the firmament;—
That firmament that domed the primal Dawn
When God's strong fiat flamed the pregnant dark
To myriad-million worlds ineffable!

BEYOND ACHIEVE

He loved the Myths of Hellas,—sedgy ways
Thrid by white-gleaming Naiads half descried,
No less than throned gods at eve enskied
Flaming on crumbling pyres. So all his days
He moved amid the amaranth, while his lays
Touched not the multitude, but still belied
The human heart he bore. His hands were tied
With golden shackles and his own dispraise;
For pallid Art did half his worth enshroud,—
And earlier draughts from those Pierian streams
Tempered the ardor of his poësy:
He spurned his best, and all that he might be,
And, high o'er peaks of knowledge, wrapped in cloud,
Peered from the sheer verge of defeated Dreams.

ON THE TWILIGHT CLIFF

THESEUS AND ARIADNE IN NAXOS

The evening glooms . . . The grass—how hushed it is,
Walled round them! Worlds away the sea-line seems.
A lithe, curved whiteness touched with rose, she gleams
Star-bright within the dusk . . . Ah, she is his,—
As twilight veils the consecrated kiss.
O Love, whose flame alone dull life redeems,
Fold them in poppied and delusive dreams
And pity them,—stabbed with the thorn of bliss!
The gloaming fades. Their heaven-born hands creep near,—
Touch, and are blent—twin petals faintly pressed.
The dim lids close. He speaks not yet, for fear
The spell break . . . Lo, she weeps!—the fluttering breast
With love supernal throbs—with love confessed—
Love smiling through the immemorial tear!

BY THE GARDEN BROOK

O WIND that wanderest from the land of snows,
Waft me the pungent, aromatic scent
Of umbered aisles of pine with balsam blent!
Then drift from dells where mountain-laurel glows,
And plainting tenderly at evening's close,
Wave the long slopes of rye to emerald seas;
Then lull a moment, near the cottage trees,
Tranced in the bosom of the folded rose.
Diffuse the lilac's fragrance round the porch,
Swaying the empty hammock to and fro,
And linger where the iris lifts her torch;
Oh! hover round me in this hallowed place,
And touch the phantom chords of long ago
To tender memories of her gentle face!

THE DREAM

I THOUGHT I flew as Icarus, far and high;
That, as I neared the sun, soaring alone,
I lost my wings, and like a meteor-stone,
Plunged to mid-ocean from the zenith sky.
Down—down I sank—through ages seemed to die—
Suspended between depths with wreckage strown,
As though some lost soul by the currents blown
Floated through dimness everlastingly!
There phosphor-phantoms lit the vanquished ships;
Skulls filled with gold—the jetson of emprise;
And there were bubbled prayers from drowning lips,
And one white hand that wore the bridal ring;
And near me, in the ooze, with suppliant eyes,
Drifted the remnant of a jeweled King.

THE POET

Honor and riches; converse with the great;
Signet and cordon from the hand of kings;
Nothing he knew of these resplendent things:
Flame of his life—his sole desired estate—
The power the Muses gave him to create—
Outweighed all rank, and gave the aurelia wings;
His thirsting soul lapped at immortal springs,
And stood, thereafter, regnant and elate.
What was the World, when that the Voice decoyed
To air-built Fanes? How could the spirit choose
A more ethereal emprise or abode,
When, at the forge of Poësy employed,
Welding the glowing metal of the Muse,
Time swept beneath him as a flying road?

"TOO LATE"

"Dear Love, all temples have I tried in vain,
And now, at twilight, I return to thine.
I see the fire upon the altar shine,
The incense wreathing round thy marble fane.
Ah, I have suffered—who can know what pain!
Here by the portal show thy face divine;
Lead me beneath the lintel to thy shrine,—
Oh, wound me with thine arrow once again!"

My voice, pathetic with imprisoned tears
And burning hopes of youth long vanished
Pierced through the marble, but Love closed the door
Barring me out: "Too late—too late!" he said,
"Why seek me now in thy defloured years,
Loveless and old? Thou should'st have sought before."

THE FEET OF THE MUSE

Unsandalled are the feet of Poësy:
Not always on the gold cloud do they press,
But oft on earth they wander, and caress
The lowly green of woodland or of lea.
They touch the violet to resiliency,
Thridding the dingle in their nakedness;
Or, wending by some cavern's lone recess,
Rival the roseate shells along the sea.
But most they love the inland, leafy streams,
Where the brown brook, that long in pools hath lain,
Foams into music o'er its rocky bed:
Oft have I seen them in my waking dreams,
And watched, from tangled coverts of the brain,
The bent fern rising from their airy tread.

"WHAT OF THE DAYSPRING"

What of the dayspring—thou, who on the height
Watchest expectant? Canst thou yet discern
Gleams of that glory for which spirits yearn
Pent on the earth? Doth the deep-curtained night
Break with the fulgence of long-promised Light?
Or, past the outposts dim, where seraphs burn
In deeps made blank by splendor, doth return
No voice assurant of benignant Might?
Shall this end all? Or, in sublimer spheres,
Will hope remain? Life surely will not be
Tombed in the yawn of some Lethean sea,
Though whirling onward as a torrent of tears
Down the black chasms toward Eternity
Thunder the swift, irremeable years!

AS TWILIGHT FALLS

The pageant pales. No longer richly pours
The stream of molten lustre undefiled;
Ethereal rivers that redundant piled
Golden alluvion on ephemeral shores
Fade into grey. Ashen the jasper floors
Where troops of Shades, from Heaven long exiled,
Wend through the glowing vistas, opal-isled,
Endlessly inward through the sunset doors.
Fainter the cohorts of the phantom hosts
Whose far-off guidon, wanly fluttering, dies;
Totter the bastions, ichor-stained, that held
Splendor of warring gods. Valkyrian ghosts
Vanish with vaporous armies out of Eld,
And dim Valhallas crumble as they rise.

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NOTE

In this volume I have refrained from offering any poems—save three—which have heretofore been published; and acknowledgment is here made to *Everybody's Magazine* for permission to use the poem which appears on page thirty-seven, and to *The Evening Mail* for the privilege of reprinting those sonnets which occur on pages fifty-four and sixty.

Of the rhymeless poems—pseudo-sonnets—on pages thirty-five, forty-one, and sixty-seven, it may be said that while *Sunset Over Camelot* exemplifies a redundancy of the adjective, *The Sovereign of the Pole* shows an entire absence of it, being an example of the alleged strength of the verb.

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